

## Letter, December 16, 1897

Gallaudet State of New York State Board of Charities OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT. 31 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK. POST OFFICE BOX 258 TELEPHONE 3268 CORTLANDY. December 16, 1897. Prof. Alexander Graham Bell, 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C. My dear Prof. Bell,

The enclosed clipping from the "New York Evening Post" of the 15th is surprising reading, emanating as it does from Washington it has occurred to me to enclose it to you with the suggestion that you make reply. The "Post" is glad to print letters on educational subjects, and would I think give you all the space you might require.

The concluding paragraph is that to which I especially invite your attention; it contains two statements. (1) "That nine-tenths of the deaf children in school in this country are being successfully educated under the combined system; and (2) "That a large majority of these children are taught to speak well."

My information assures me that both of these statements are unqualifiedly false; doubtless you have the figures to substantiate my statement. In this State, I write from memory, if the St. Joseph's Schools claim that they are oral schools is admitted more than one-third of our pupils are taught by the oral method.

As to the second statement. For several years I tried the speech of every pupil in the schools in this State which receive State pupils, and as you know all methods of instruction are followed within our borders, and I cannot fairly claim, would it were otherwise, that five per cent of the children were able to speak well. I am assuming that Dr. Gallaudet's use of the word "deaf" means those who became deaf before having acquired speech.

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May I avail of this opportunity to convey to you and Mrs. Bell the expression of my regret at the recent decease of Mr. Hubbard.

Hoping that this will find you and yours in the enjoyment of good health, I am,

Very sincerely, Mr. R. Stewart 1 enclosure.

The Best Methods of Teaching the Deaf.

To the Editor of The Evening Post:

Sir: I have read with interest the article in your issue of last Saturday in reference to the proposed training of students in the Normal College to be teachers of the deaf, and I am more than surprised that any one writing on such a subject should commit such errors, and so many, as are to be found in the article.

Normal schools for the training of teachers of the deaf have existed for years in Great Britain and several of the continental countries of Europe. In this country the training of such teachers in the oral method has been provided for in connection with schools for the deaf in Massachusetts, Illinois, and other states for several years. In 1891 a well-equipped normal department was established in connection with this college for the training of young persons having all their faculties to teach the deaf, either by the manual, the oral, or the auricular method.

This department of Gallaudet College has been in successful operation for over six years. All its students have been taught to teach by all known methods, and they are now doing satisfactory work in schools for the deaf in Texas, Alabama, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Indiana, New York, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Utah, the District of Columbia, and elsewhere. One has been called to be the head master of a prominent school for the deaf and the blind in Belfast, Ireland. The normal department of our college is the only existing

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school where teachers can be trained in all the methods which are necessary in the most enlightened education of the deaf.

It is not true, as claimed by the writer in your issue of Saturday, that one can learn to teach by the manual method more easily than by the oral, nor is there reason for saying that "the manual and manual alphabet methods are primitive and imperfect." What is true in reference to methods was stated in an article which you published last October, giving an account of recent investigations I have made in Europe, namely, that the best judgment of those best qualified to judge to-day is, that for the most effective education of the deaf a combination of existing methods is demanded, which shall give to each its appropriate place, thus recognizing the important fact, which is frequently lost sight of, that the capacities of the deaf are so various that no single method will suit all cases.

Nine-tenths of the deaf children now in school in this country are being successfully educated under the combined system, and a large majority of these children are taught to speak well.

Edward M. Gallaudet.

President Gallaudet College for the Deaf.

Washington, December 13.